



ImPRessions

MARCH 2009

Mississippi Beach Chapter
Public Relations Association of Mississippi

2009 PRAM MS Beach Board Members

Melissa Bryant, President,
melissabryant@coastepa.com,
Coast Electric Power Association

Hannah Bell, Vice President,
Hannah.bell@unitedway.org,
United Way of South MS

Mary Wimberly, APR, Secretary,
bfvimjr@bellsouth.net,
Tulane University

Charmaine Williams Schmermund,
Treasurer,
charmaine.williams@usm.edu,
Southern MS Gulf Coast

Julie Bosley, Programs Chair,
Julie.bosley@hcahealthcare.com,
Garden Park Medical Center

April Jordan, Membership Chair,
ajordan@beaurivage.com,
Beau Rivage

Susan Perkins, APR, Publicity Chair,
susan.perkins@dmr.ms.gov,
Department of Marine Resources

Leah Snyder, Community Service Chair,
eastbeach@cablone.net,
East Beach Specialties

Mary Anne Caldwell, APR,
Awards & Scholarship Chair,
macaldwell@lmdc.org,
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center

Kristie Aylett, APR,
Immediate Past President,
ka@kardconsulting.com,
The KARD Group

Keith Guillot, Web Manager,
kguillot@eleyguildhardy.com,
Eley Guild Hardy Architects

John McCollins, Newsletter Editor,
johnmc@fapdm.com,
First American Printing and Direct Mail

April Lollar, APR, Accreditation Chair,
aprillollar@coastepa.com,
Coast Electric Power Association

MARCH SPEAKER

Kimberly Nastasi, IOM, is our speaker for the March 9 meeting. Kimberly is currently the CEO of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce where she oversees the Biloxi, Gulfport, Long Beach, and Pass Christian Chambers of Commerce along with Leadership Gulf Coast, CYP: Coast Young Professionals and the newly established Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce Foundation. She will discuss the Coast Chamber and talk about the challenges of promoting the Chamber and how public relations plays an important role in their success.

In addition, Sheila White will present a short video clip on Gulf Coast Leadership and provide information about the opportunity to participate in the 2009-2010 class.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Our chapter is pleased to welcome eight new members already this calendar year. Please introduce yourself at our next meeting and encourage them to get involved in chapter activities. As a member, please consider inviting potential new members to be guests at our meetings and help grow our membership.

Jessica Dukes, Hard Rock Casino
Christen Hartley, Coast Young Professionals
Deirdre McGowan, Insight Ltd
Jaffe Perniciaro, Harrison County Tourism Commission
Katie Sandoz, MS Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce
Lori Beth Susman, M2 Media
Gailyn Williams, student attending Tulane
David Wolf, Grace Healthcare Company

Next PRAM Meeting

12 Noon on Monday, March 9
Great Southern Club Sunset Room
(15th floor, Hancock Plaza,
Downtown Gulfport)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear PRAM MS Beach,

Spring is in the air. We are beginning to feel some warm temperatures along the Gulf Coast. It's a beautiful time of year and there is a lot happening in our area. We should all be proud of the growth and opportunity that we are seeing in our communities.

We had a fantastic turnout at last month's meeting. Thanks to all who attended and special thanks to our speakers John Harry and Shellene Barton from Home of Grace for an outstanding presentation. They do a great job in their many roles and gave some interesting insight into what's happening in the non-profit sector.

We'll have an especially informative meeting next week, with our own member CEO of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce Kimberly Nastasi providing a discussion about the challenges of promoting the Chamber and how public relations plays an important role in their success. Be sure to come early and spend some time networking with your fellow chapter members. I hope to see you on Monday, March 9.

Congratulations to our PRAM Professional Achievement Award Nominee Kristie Aylett. Kristie will represent our chapter as the state nominee for this award at the Awards' Day Luncheon on April 17 in Jackson. The award goes to a practitioner that exemplifies a commitment to the field of public relations through their career achievement, professional achievement, accreditation and continuing education and community service. Each year, the winner becomes part of a pool of professional achievement award winners from Mississippi that can compete at the SPRF level. Best of luck to Kristie as she represents our chapter for this prestigious award!

All of you should have received your dues invoice by now and hopefully you have returned it. If not, please contact our Treasurer Charmaine Schmermund and she'll be happy to provide you with any information that you need.

Please be thinking of ways that our board can serve you best. We welcome any ideas that you would like to share. I look forward to seeing you on Monday.

Yours in PRAM,
Melissa Bryant

March Community Service Project

After a highly successful food drive for the Hancock County Food Pantry, PRAM is now trying to make a difference for the four-legged members of our community.

For its next community service project, PRAM will collect dog food and cat food to be donated to the Humane Society of South Mississippi.

PRAM members who are interested in supporting the project should bring small bags of pet food to the PRAM meetings in March and April. Name brands are preferred for their higher nutritional value, and the need is greater for dog food than cat food. Cash donations to purchase food are also appreciated.

HSSM will distribute the food to pet owners through its new Wag-n-Train outreach program, which helps pet owners solve problems before their bond with their pets is damaged and before it becomes necessary to surrender the pet or for Animal Control officers to issue citations.

"The program is a vitally important tool in helping HSSM to achieve our mission of creating a happy and healthy community for companion animals and humans alike," said Misty L.S. Velásquez, APR, HSSM director of development and a PRAM member.

Each year, more than 16,000 pets are voluntarily surrendered by the owners to the Humane Society, with the hopes of finding them a new home. In many cases, the problems that cause animals to come to the shelter could be solved with a few tools and a little know-how, and the lives of thousands more animals could be saved every year.

Through the Wag-n-Train program, HSSM goes to a neighborhood and delivers a variety of services free of charge to the pet owners there. The Wag-n-Train program is made possible through a grant from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' (ASPCA) Mission: Orange initiative.

From the SPRF President

Are you getting the most out of your SPRF membership? As an umbrella organization to members of the [Emerald Coast Public Relations Organization](#) (ECPRO), the Public Relations Association of Louisiana (PRAL- [Baton Rouge](#) and Alexandria Chapters), the [Public Relations Association of Mississippi](#) (PRAM) and the [Public Relations Council of Alabama](#) (PRCA), SPRF is fortunate to be able to offer its members many benefits. These benefits include:

- Representation on the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) – this is the sole method by which SPRF members may be Accredited in Public Relations.
- Member discount to the SPRF Annual Conference – the top public relations-related conference in the region. Your member discount on registration far exceeds the actual cost of your SPRF dues. Go ahead and mark your calendar for our Annual Conference to be held October 4-6 at the Gold Strike Resort in Tunica, Miss. Check out www.sprf.org for more details on how you can be "taken away to Tunica" and be sure to catch the video (consider yourself forewarned, it's catchy).
- Online membership database – as a member, you are part of the SPRF online directory along with 1,300 other PR professionals. We encourage you to follow the instructions below to login, verify your information is correct and make any changes if needed.
 - go to www.sprf.org
 - click on membership directory
 - Log-in with your email address and the default password "sprf"; you may change your password to something personal of you wish in the edit section.
 - click on edit your own info
 - make changes
 - click on update
- Extensive regional awards programs – Lanterns, Professional Achievement, Educator of the Year and the brand-new Chapter of Distinction
- The quarterly *Lantern* newsletter.
- Increased professionalism of the organization – SPRF now has an Association Assistant whose sole responsibility is to serve the volunteer board by maintaining the organization and improving its operations and efficiency.
- A professional Code of Ethics
- Local, state and regional leadership opportunities
- Extensive networking with professionals from a four-state area – SPRF membership has hit record enrollments the last two years.
- New and growing member discounts (a complete list is published on the website)
- Exclusive SPRF news and information
- Job Bank postings
- Professional resource library
- Membership survey data (this is a survey year)
- Survey tools (e.g. Survey Monkey account for use by any state organization/chapter)
- Teleconferencing account for use by any state organization/chapter

SPRF is also now offering complimentary web services to its state organizations/chapters. If you need a web page or would like to review the terms of service, contact your representative for details on this exciting new program.

SPRF also has a group on LinkedIn, the web's largest business networking site that connects you to people with similar interests and goals. SPRF members can be introduced to other public relations professionals, search for jobs, seek expert advice from your peers and request personal references. Click here for a link to our group: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=140805>.

Thank you for your membership in SPRF. I encourage you to stay involved at your local chapter level, and of course, please let me know if you have any questions.

Adam Kelley, APR
2009 SPRF President



PRAM Donates to Hancock County Food Pantry

Leah Snyder (left), Community Services Chair for the Public Relations Association of Mississippi (PRAM) Mississippi Beach Chapter, and PRAM-Mississippi Beach Chapter President Melissa Bryant, present Hancock County Food Pantry Deputy Director Frank Manchester with a donation at PRAM's February meeting. PRAM-Beach Chapter members collected non-perishable food items and monetary donations for the food pantry. The Hancock County Food Pantry feeds more than 550 families each month.

Meet Your Board Members

Part 3 of 3

Mary Wimberley

This year's secretary, Mary Wimberly, APR, is a charter member of the PRAM Mississippi Beach Chapter. She was named a Senior Practitioner in 2005.

Mary recently retired after working 28 years in the non-profit sector. In the post-Katrina era, she has held senior management positions with two hurricane recovery organizations.

Mary has a BA in journalism and a master's degree in public relations, both from USM. She continues as an adjunct instructor at Tulane University's School of Continuing Studies, Biloxi, teaching courses in public relations, mass communications and journalism.

Hannah Bell

I have lived on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and been an active member of PRAM Mississippi Beach since 2004. Last year, I enjoyed getting to know so many of you via the sign-in table at our meetings, and this year, I'm happy to serve as your Vice President. I also served as Community Service Chair for our PRAM chapter in 2007. I am currently the Marketing & Communications Director for United Way of South Mississippi, where I oversee advertising, marketing, communications, media relations, special events, and all things PR. In my spare time, I enjoy playing tennis.

Melissa Bryant

Melissa Bryant is a Communications Specialist at Coast Electric Power Association where she has been employed since 2003. Serving Hancock, Harrison and Pearl River Counties, Coast Electric is the largest electric cooperative in the state. She is responsible for effectively communicating internal and external messages through various publications and media outlets. Melissa is the current PRAM Mississippi Beach President and has served the positions of Vice President of Membership, Community Service Chair, Secretary and Programs Chair over the past five years. She holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from USM and a master's degree in business administration from William Carey College. In her spare time, Melissa enjoys spending time with her two-year old son, Cole and participating in the Gulf Coast Running Club.



Melissa Bryant, 2009 PRAM president (left), recognizes Kristie Aylett, APR, at January's meeting for serving as last year's PRAM Mississippi Beach Chapter president.